

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1745

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PN, CS

SUBJECT: TORRIJOS' FOUR-HOUR VISIT TO COSTA RICA

1. SUMMARY: DURING GENERAL TORRIJOS' VISIT TO COSTA RICA
OCTOBER 15 HE REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED MEETING OF CENTRAL AMERICAN
PRESIDENT WITH PRESIDENT ODUBER AND TOLD PRESS THAT PRESIDENT
LAUGERUD INVITED HIM TO ATTEND. TORRIJOS ALSO MADE OPTIMISTIC
SOUNDS ABOUT PROGRESS ON CANAL TALKS.
END SUMMARY

2. GENERAL OMAR TORRIJOS VISITED COSTA RICA AFTERNOON OCTOBER
15. HE LUNCHEDED WITH PRESIDENT ODUBER, VISITED FAMILY AT THE
PANAMANIAN EMBASSY (HIS SISTER IS WIFE OF PANAMANIAN
AMBASSADOR), AND ANSWERED PRESS QUESTIONS ON THE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS
AND OTHER TOPICS.

3. CENTRAL AMERICAN CHIEFS OF STATE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR
OCTOBER 31 IN GUATEMALA, WAS REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED WITH ODUBER.
LA NACION REPORTS THAT TORRIJOS STATED HE HAS BEEN INVITED
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TO THIS MEETING BY GUATEMALAN PRESIDENT LAUGERUB.

4. ODUBER AND TORRIJOS ALSO REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED THEIR RECENT NATIONALIZATIONS OF UNITED BRANDS LANDS. TORRIJOS URGED ODUBER TO USE THE SAME METHOD OF AGRARIAN REFORM IN THE NEWLY ACQUIRED LANDS IN SOUTHERN COSTA RICA THAT PANAMA IS USING IN THE CHIRIQUI AREA FOR TWO COUNTRIES TO ACHIEVE EQUILIBRIUM IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRONTIER AREA.

5. RE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS, TORRIJOS IS QUOTED (EXCELSIOR'S LEAD): "THEY'RE GOING FINE... EVEN THOUGH VIOLENCE IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER." LA NACION, THE ONLY PAPER GRANTED EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH TORRIJOS DURING HIS VISIT, ACCENTUATED THE POSITIVE: "I BELIEVE THERE WILL BE A PEACEFUL SOLUTION, THAT THE CANAL WILL BE PANAMANIAN... THE CONVERSATIONS WITH THE US ARE WELL ADVANCED... LET'S NOT SPEAK OF VIOLENCE."

6. TORRIJOS SAID THERE WERE TWO POINTS LEFT TO NEGOTIATE-- HOW LONG US TROOPS WOULD REMAIN AND WHEN PANAMA WOULD TAKE OVER ADMINISTRATION OF THE CANAL. HE RECOGNIZED FORCES IN THE US WHICH ARE AGAINST CANCELLATION OF THE 1903 TREATY, BUT HE SAID, "IT'S A MATTER OF WAITING, OF HAVING PATIENCE." HE ADDED THAT IT IS POSSIBLE THE TREATY--BASED ON THE EIGHT-POINT FEBRUARY 1974 ACCORD WHICH TORRIJOS RECITED FROM MEMORY FOR THE LA NACION REPORT-- COULD BE SIGNED IN 1977.

7. COMMENT: IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT TORRIJOS DID NOT SAY HE WOULD ATTEND THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENTS' MEETING-- ONLY THAT HE HAD BEEN INVITED. LANE

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